



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 15, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 205 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION WORKING GROUP AND OTHER COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH VISITATION CENTERS AT ALL STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JAILS.**

Hearing: April 16, 2019, 1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the resolution to support appropriate child-parent relationships of children of incarcerated parents, and provides comments. DHS defers to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) with the authority over correctional facilities and programs, including any planning and resource needs necessary to implement.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this resolution is to require the development of a plan for visitation centers for children of incarcerated parents at all state operated correctional facilities.

DHS is open to further discussions and collaboration with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Family Reunification Working Group, and other stakeholders to develop a plan to develop visitation centers at the state's correction facilities.

DPS has already established programs to promote parenting skills and other child-bonding activities such as Keiki O Ka Aina's Play and Learn, Read Aloud, Read-to-me, Keala Hou, Family Days, etc. Assessment, planning, collaboration and recommendation for the development of this effort will require new staff resources and funding. New ongoing funding will also be required to implement and sustain a statewide DPS visitation program at all facilities, based on the recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**NOLAN P. ESPINDA**  
DIRECTOR

**Maria C. Cook**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Jodie F. Maesaka-Hirata**  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

**Renee R. Sonobe Hong**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 205,  
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN  
CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TO WORK  
WITH THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION GROUP AND OTHER COMMUNITY  
STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH VISITATION  
CENTERS AT ALL STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JAILS.

Presented by Nolan P. Espinda  
Director, Department of Public Safety  
to the  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 16, 2019; 1:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Chairs Ruderman and Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the  
Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the intent of HCR 205,  
which aims to have established, at all State correctional facilities and jails, family-  
oriented visitation centers.

PSD appreciates the support of the Department of Human Services (DHS)  
in being open to further discussion and collaboration and in providing the  
comment that such planning and collaboration will require increased staffing and  
resources.

The Department also notes that because the parents are offenders, visitation centers must be safe and secure, while providing a caring and nurturing environment for all participants. Ideally, PSD would invite discussion for such visitation centers to be located at minimum security correctional facilities and include wrap-around support services for the children, incarcerated parents, and caretakers, or that consideration be given to placing the visitation centers in close proximity to Work Furlough program sites in the community to be more accessible to all participants.

Moreover, PSD notes that socialization and parenting skills training for incarcerated parents, which is already offered by the Department, could be further augmented to better prepare the parents to participate in the visitation program. The Department would welcome additional dedicated resources for this enhancement.

Should the resolution be adopted, PSD looks forward to collaborating with the DHS Child Welfare Services Division (DHS-CWS), the Keiki Caucus's Family Reunification Working Group, and other entities to develop a plan to establish family-friendly visitation centers to promote the well-being of children of incarcerated parents and to facilitate a sound and effective family reunification process that ensures that Court-ordered visits, special visits, and parenting support services are provided to incarcerated parents.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Sen. Russell Ruderman, Chair

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Sen. Clarence Nishihara, Chair

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

1:15 pm

Room 016

### **STRONG SUPPORT for HCR 205 – DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR VISITATION CENTERS**

Aloha Chairs Ruderman & Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai & Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED UNDER THE "CARE AND CUSTODY" OF THE STATE** as well as the approximately 5,400 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that more than 1,600 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

HCR 205 requests the department of human services, in consultation with the department of public safety, to work with the Family Reunification Working Group and other stakeholders to develop a plan to establish visitation centers at all state correctional facilities and jails.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this resolution. We are part of the Family Reunification Working Group and stand ready to assist the Department of Human Services in developing a plan to keep incarcerated people connected to their families and loved ones. We cite research to show that this is a proven strategy to reduce recidivism.

### **THE RESEARCH:**

#### **The Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism**

[https://mn.gov/doc/assets/11-11MNPrisonVisitationStudy\\_tcm1089-272781.pdf](https://mn.gov/doc/assets/11-11MNPrisonVisitationStudy_tcm1089-272781.pdf)

Minnesota Department of Corrections (St. Paul, MN) 2011

Visitation has a significant effect on recidivism. “Any visit reduced the risk of recidivism by 13 percent for felony reconvictions and 25 percent for technical violation revocations, which reflects the fact that visitation generally had a greater impact on revocations. The findings further showed that more frequent and recent visits were associated with a decreased risk of recidivism” (p. 27).

### **Inmate Social Ties and the Transition to Society Does *Visitation Reduce Recidivism?***

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.865.9780&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

William D. Bales, Daniel P. Mears - Florida State University

...Consonant with the few extant empirical studies of the topic (e.g., Adams and Fischer 1976; Holt and Miller 1972; Ohlin 1951), any visitation and more frequent visitation were both associated with a lower likelihood of recidivism. Additional, more nuanced analyses conveyed similar findings, such as the notion that visitation over many different months exerts a greater effect than visits over fewer months. Visitation was also associated with delaying the onset, or timing, of recidivism.

### **Blessed Be the Social Tie That Binds: The Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism**

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403411429724> - Grant Duwe1 and Valerie Clark, December 2011

...we found that visitation significantly decreased the risk of recidivism, a result that was robust across all of the Cox regression models that were estimated. The results also showed that visits from siblings, in-laws, fathers, and clergy were the most beneficial in reducing the risk of recidivism, whereas visits from ex-spouses significantly increased the risk. The findings suggest that revising prison visitation policies to make them more “visitor friendly” could yield public safety benefits by helping offenders establish a continuum of social support from prison to the community.

The data and research show that keeping families and loved ones connected does reduce recidivism. Let’s stop the intergenerational incarceration in Hawai`i noted by the Department of Justice when they came here in 1998. Of the eight jurisdictions they visited, they found that Hawai`i had more intergenerational incarceration than any other jurisdiction they visited.

**WE CAN DO THIS! WE ARE HAWAI`I!** The community stands ready to help.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committees to pass this measure as is.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our research and to testify!

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Hawaii

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of  
West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action  
Network

Hawaii Health & Harm  
Reduction Center

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native  
Hawaiian Health Care  
Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together  
(PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the  
Great Northwest and  
Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services  
& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family  
Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
Susannah Wesley Community  
Center

The Catalyst Group

April 13, 2019

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair,

And members of the Committee on Human Services and the Committee on  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 205 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, TO WORK WITH THE FAMILY REUNIFICATION WORKING GROUP AND OTHER COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO ESTABLISH VISITATION CENTERS AT ALL STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES AND JAILS.**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HCR 205 Requesting the Department of Human Services, in Consultation with the Department of Public Safety, to Work with the Family Reunification Working Group and Other Community Stakeholders to Develop a Plan to Establish Visitation Centers at All State Correctional Facilities and Jails.

Children of incarcerated parents experience grief and loss, similar to the experience of divorce or the death of a parent. About 43% of parents in federal or state prisons had been living with their children at the time admission leaving 57% of youth already at risk with no parental or legal guardian's supervision. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk of abuse or neglect, and more likely to have mental problems, and difficulty in school. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult correctional systems themselves. Regular visitation provides opportunities to sustain the parent-child bond while a parent is incarcerated, which can alleviate many of these problems.

Prisoners who have regular contact with their children benefit as well. They are less likely to violate prison rules and create trouble for prison authorities. They are more likely to take advantage of rehabilitation and educational opportunities while in prison. Regular contact with children increases the chances of successful reintegration into the community when a parent is released from prison.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "C".

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



Testimony on HCR 205 Requesting the Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, to work with the Family Reunification Working Group and other community stakeholders to develop a plan to establish visitation centers at all state operated correctional centers<sup>5</sup> before the Senate Committees on Human Services and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

April 16, 2019

1:15 pm

Conference Rm. 016

Aloha Chairs Ruderman and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Rhoads and Wakai, and members of the Senate Committees on Human Services and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs, **my name is Stephen Morse. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC) and am here today to support HCR 205** Requesting the Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, to work with the Family Reunification Working Group and other community stakeholders to develop a plan to establish visitation centers at all state operated correctional centers.

Members, for the record, BFC is the fiscal, technical, and administrative support entity for seven Neighborhood Place centers statewide that provide support and strengthening services to families at risk of child abuse and neglect under a POS contract with the Department of Human Services. Historically, our work has focused on traditional risk factors for child abuse, including homelessness or unstable housing, unemployment and low incomes, substance abuse, chronic health problems, and physical disabilities. However, in 2014, after much research and analysis, BFC determined that one of the most severe risk factors for child neglect in the families we serve is that there is at least one parent who is incarcerated.

An estimated 2.7 million children nationwide have at least one parent that is incarcerated, and studies conducted by the National Fatherhood Initiative show that in terms of negative impacts on children, incarceration may be worse than the death of a parent or the divorce of parents. Even more disheartening is the evidence that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to become incarcerated themselves as teenagers or adults, thus continuing the “cycle of incarceration” that sadly becomes generational in some families.

Because of these alarming statistics, BFC, in January 2014, helped organize and convene a working group to explore the issues surrounding children and families impacted by parental incarceration and to come up with solutions. Called the Family Reunification Working Group (FRWG), the group is comprised of representatives from several child and family serving organizations and service providers. Besides ourselves, it includes, Hawaii Prisoners Resource Center, dba Holomua Center, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, ALU LIKE, Inc., Lili'uokalani Trust, Keiki O Ka Aina, Family Programs Hawaii, Adult Friends for Youth, Community Alliance on Prisons, the Ka Hale Ho'ola No Na Wahine Program at the Fernhurst YWCA, Hawaii Technology Institute, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery, Makana O Ke Akua Clean and Sober Living, Holomua Pu'u honua, and the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family. It also includes parents of children who have been affected by incarceration, adults who were former children of incarcerated parents, ex-offenders, and Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners. The group established two immediate priorities to work on, one of which was to develop a database of children in Hawaii impacted by incarceration. During the 2015 State Legislature, the group was successful in getting a measure passed and signed into law (Act 16, SLH 2015) that requires the Hawaii Department of Public Safety's Corrections Division

to collect data at the point of intake on the number of minor children under the age of 18 that offenders entering the Hawaii corrections system have.

We now have three years of data collected from Public Safety, and although there remains some reliability issues relating to the collection, a problem we are working with Public Safety on to fix, we feel safe in saying two things: (1) of the inmates being processed through intake during this period of time, at least 30% identified themselves as parents; and (2) approximately 4,000 children under the age of 18 are annually affected by parental incarceration. Again, this is based only on the intake data and does not include the number of minor children of parents who have been in the correctional system for several years.

This resolution is important because we believe it will help the State improve its visitation programs at state correctional facilities. The prison environment can be frightening and traumatizing for children. Visits can include long waits, body frisks, rude treatment, and exposure to crowded visiting rooms with no activities for children. Such conditions do not encourage frequent visits between incarcerated parents and their children and yet, findings from studies suggest the maintenance of family ties and parent-child relationships is linked to post-release success, lower rates of recidivism, and fewer parole violations. They also studies suggest that the alarming rates of intergenerational incarceration may be attributed to the lack of communication and maintenance of child-incarcerated parent relationships.

Visitation Centers can help reduce these adverse childhood experiences and keep families together. This resolution is important to not only help keep families together but for creating a more therapeutic healing system in correctional facilities. It looks at visitation centers through a social services lens, a place where children and significant other family members can remain unified with the offender and where professional social workers can identify and focus strengthening services on children at risk of being part of the cycle of incarceration. This is why it is important that the working group created by this resolution includes representation from the Department of Human Services and community-based social service providers, in addition to the Department of Public Safety.

Mahalo for allowing us to share this testimony with the Committee.



**LATE**

Committees: Committee on Human Services  
Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, & Military Affairs  
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, April 16th, 2019, 1:15 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 016  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in Support of H.C.R. 205

Dear Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committees:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i writes in **support** of H.C.R. 205 which would request the Department of Human Services, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, to work with the Family Reunification Group and other community stakeholders to develop a plan to establish visitation centers at all state correctional facilities.

"Children who continue to stay in touch with their parent in prison exhibit fewer disruptive and anxious behaviors. There is also evidence that it helps the parents as well by lowering recidivism rates and making reunification easier and more likely once the parent is released from prison." Recognizing the benefits of parent-child visiting and improving their current environments to be more family-friendly and provide greater opportunities for visiting is a part of a better and improved vision for corrections. Imprisonment is not one-dimensional as millions of families are victims of mass incarceration.

Maintaining family ties is among the best ways to reduce recidivism<sup>1</sup>. In this re-imagined era of corrections where we all want better outcomes, the most productive way to create positive change is to bring community groups and government entities together in collaboration.

The HCR 85 Task Force report on prison reform states, "While incarcerated, every inmate should be provided with the resources and opportunity to build and maintain family relationships, thereby strengthening the support system available to them upon release." We agree which is why ACLU of Hawai'i supports H.C.R. 205.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Monica Espitia  
Smart Justice Campaign Director  
ACLU of Hawai'i

*The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for 50 years.*

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<sup>1</sup> Separation by Bars and Miles: Visitation in State Prison, Prison Policy Initiative, October 20, 2015.  
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/prisonvisits.html>

**HCR-205**

Submitted on: 4/13/2019 7:53:31 AM

Testimony for HMS on 4/16/2019 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	No

## Comments:

Aloha Chairs Rudderman and Nishihara and Committee Members

I strongly support HCR205 to urge DHS and DPS to work toward developing a plan for family visitation centers at all jails and prisons. This is very long overdue! However, I note that it is appalling that the legislature has to ask DPS to do what it should already have been doing. I would also point out that at present, there is NO in-person visitation for children OR adults at OCCC and Halawa, nor any plans to allow in-person visitation with family members in the future.

Concerns for continuing family ties and especially with children of incarcerated persons appear not to be a part of DPS, which focuses almost exclusively on punishment for offenders rather than recognizing other impacts on their families or the community.

This is yet another reason that Director Espinda should not be reconfirmed. Even if this resolution is passed, nothing will come of it if he continues in office.

In hopes for a better future, I urge you to pass this resolution.

**HCR-205**

Submitted on: 4/16/2019 10:33:20 AM

Testimony for HMS on 4/16/2019 1:15:00 PM

**LATE**

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Democrats Legislative Priorities Committee	Support	No

## Comments:

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Chair Nishihara, and members of the Committee on Human Services and Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs:

The O`ahu County Democrats Legislative Priorities Committee is in support of HCR205 as it has been shown that Hawai'i's correctional system can benefit from the establishment of visitation centers at all local correctional prisons and jails with the hope to strengthen, rebuild, and reunify children with their incarcerated parents and ensure the welfare and wellbeing of children of incarcerated parents. As such, we support the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Safety, and the Family Reunification Working Group in developing a plan to establish such visitation centers at all State correctional facilities and jails.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR205.

Mahalo nui loa.

Melodie Aduja

Chair, O`ahu County Democrats Legislative Priorities Committee

**LATE**

COMMITTEE OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Senator Russell E Ruderman, Chair & Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTEERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair & Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

HCR 205

16 April 2019

1:15 p.m. Conference Room 016

Aloha! My name is Ethan Hunter Carrasco. I am a proud retired veteran of the U.S. Army, a Husband to my beautiful wife of 14 years, and father of two beautiful little boys. I am currently 4 weeks away from earning my Masters in Social Work at the University of Hawaii. I hope to work in the field of as a Clinical Mental Health Therapist, to help our communities reach healing, recovery, and their potentials.

I am a firm believer that we are all a mixture of human frailty and ultimate potential, every last one of us. I have had a few family members who have spent time in the prison systems. Some have spent most of their lives behind bars and others have been set free only to return again. We may ask what is wrong with these folks, but instead, we should ask what happened to them and what is their story. For too many in correctional facilities and jails a childhood teeming with childhood maltreatment can be easily traced. A young soul that like a like a young sapling tree jagged without the sun light and rains. It is only with the nurture, emotional availability, and mentorship that a human can reach their potential and grow to be shade bearers and fruitful in our society. These men and woman, like so many of our own family members in the prison system, are humans with souls, pains, and hurts much like anyone else.

I'm here to testify of the need to establish visitation centers at all state correctional facilities and jails. We are social creatures. Let us not neglect the need for human touch, for family, and for relationships. These men and woman miss their families and in many ways visiting with their children, mothers, fathers, and other members of their Ohana is a healing point we can't take away.

Ethan Hunter Carrasco  
SSG USA Ret.

808-379-6620